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*Life History and the Irish Migrant Experience in Post-War England*. By Barry Hazley, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2020, xvi + 253pp. ISBN 978-1-5261-2800-3, £80.

Abstract: Barry Hazley's new work on the memory making of Irish migrant experience in post-war England is thought provoking and original, contributing to important debates about identity and belonging in modern Britain.

Key words: Migrant, Irish, post-war, memory, oral history, theory, England, the Troubles, emigration, migration, diaspora, gender, Popular Memory Theory.

This work is a refreshing analysis of the Irish in England that keeps the Irish people themselves in the foreground. As Hazley rightly points out in his introduction, the history of the Irish in England has repeatedly been told through the prism of political events, and as a result, the human dimension has been somewhat lost. By using oral histories and the innovative use of Popular Memory Theory, a first for studies in the Irish Diaspora, Hazley ensures that those Irish who migrated during the post-war years are front and centre in this history, allowing an insight into the psychological adjustments of an Irish migrant in England during this period.

Hazley's work opens a new line of investigation on the Irish in modern England by bringing the making of migrant memory under the historical microscope. Building on the established scholarship of the Irish contribution to the economic and social life of post-war England, Hazley uses migrant memory to offer perspectives into the current debates around identity and belonging in modern Britain, and the Irish community's place within this.

The application of Popular Memory Theory adds a stimulating layer to this work that sheds light on the formation of migrant identity. Rather than only using oral history interviews to gain access to untold stories in an empirical manner, Hazley investigates how his interviewees rework and shape their memories according to popular strands of discourse, and how they gain composure. As a result, Hazley pays heed to the factual inaccuracies or incompleteness of participants' answers, rather than

just extracting information from them, leading to insightful, multi-faceted analyses on identity formation. While the use of Popular Memory Theory may be initially difficult to comprehend for those unfamiliar with oral history theory, Hazley's introduction lays out the basics clearly and his analyses using the method are intertwined with the interviews, allowing the reader to locate aspects of composure in the text of the interview. In sum, it is a different and possibly unfamiliar method for looking at migrant identity, but not an inaccessible one.

The range of themes covered in this book are vast and thought provoking. Hazley covers topics that have been well researched in the literature on the Irish in England during this period, such as the Troubles, large scale emigration and the policies associated with this, as well as including comparatively under researched aspects. Of particular significance is the chapter on masculinity. Although the post-war Irish migrant is synonymous in popular culture with the heavy drinking, male construction worker, there has been comparatively little gendered historical analysis of this perception and the discourse surrounding it. Through interviews with ex-construction workers, Hazley dissects the construction site as a place where complex codes of class, masculinity and diasporic belongings intersected by highlighting themes such as social mobility and the idea of honest work in migrants' composure, as well as darker aspects of this role, such as exploitation and injury in the workplace. Hazley's work is a welcome contribution to the burgeoning field of masculinity studies in Irish and diaspora history, which compared to the recent work on Irish femininity in the diaspora through studies which have focused on themes such as nursing, domestic servants and vocational work, is lacking.

One of the book's key strengths lies in how Hazley incorporates his oral history interviews with migrants into the wider exploration of cultural discourses and psychological theory. Through this inclusion, you obtain a glimpse into the intricate workings of how memory and identity are made, therefore keeping the individual at the centre of a history where these actors could be grouped into a uniform block. Through reading these interviews alongside Hazley's analysis, the reader is witness

to the self being made, whether it is in the context of negotiating being Irish in England during the troubles, or dealing with religious beliefs and how they intersect with life in new, more secularised country.

Arguably the most intriguing section of Hazley's work is the final chapter, which focuses on the idea of 'otherness' and how Irish migrants fitted into a new landscape where skin colour replaced religion as the key to national belonging. Hazley uses the bombing of the Arndale Centre in Manchester in 1996 as a prism through which to explore the idea that Irish migrants in England still had to negotiate the complex relationship between British and Irish politics in the formation of their migrant identities. This analysis challenges sociological interpretations of this period which suggest that the Irish were an invisible race within post-war England due to their white skin and ability to speak English, and instead Hazley points to the experience of 'multiple racisms' and the wider complexity of the position of the Irish in England. This topic alone with this approach could merit a study in itself.

Overall, this is an original piece of work which sheds new light on the emotional and psychological aspect of Irish migrant life in England during this period. Hazley deserves credit for keeping the individual at the centre of an analysis where broad themes such as emigration, assimilation and gender are explored, while also managing to emphasise wider patterns experienced by the Irish migrant community as a whole. Those unfamiliar with Popular Memory Theory should not be deterred, as Hazley walks the reader through this methodology in a way that is easy to follow. Indeed, the application of Popular Memory Theory to the study of later generations of the Irish diaspora in England could provide exciting opportunities for comparison, and hopefully Hazley will not be the last to pursue this approach.

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